(b) Custom House Agents have been provided with basic infrastructural facilities, such as, working place/table space etc. for transacting day-to-day business.

Section 146 of the Customs Act, 1962 empowers the Department to appoint the Custom House Agents (CHAs). The CHA Licencing Regulations, 1984 (CHALR '84) prescribe the terms and conditions for the appointment of these agents. The licence is granted to the applicant on fulfilling the conditions laid down in Regulations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of CHALR '84.

(c) and (d) The pendency position of Bills of Entry (B/E) in various cities is given below (As on 31st March, 2000) :

Mumbai	2308	Hyderabad	24	Nhava Sheva	18
Delhi	299	Vishakapatnam	14	Bangalore	92
Calcutta	96	Amritsar	14	Mangalore	20
Chennai	327	Jaipur	22	Cochin	96
Ahmedabad	65	Kandla	16		

(e) Reasons for pendency include non-payment of duty by the importers, importers/CHAs not coming forward promptly for examination of goods, delay in reply to query memos by the CHAs/importers and offence cases etc.

The pendency of B/Es is closely monitored by the senior officers to ensure speedy clearance.

Busting of a racket operating in Oriental Bank of Commerce

*508. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Ministry of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any racket operating in connivance with the officials of the Oriental Bank of Commerce to defraud the Bank of crores of rupees has lately been busted;

(b) if so, the *modus operandi* of the racket; and

(c) the details of the officers and others apprehended in connection therewith?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL) : (a) Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) has reported that a recent attempt to defraud the Bank to the extent of Rs. 9.70 crores at Overseas Chennai branch has been foiled by the bank.

(b) A current account was opened with Yelahanka branch of OBC at Bangalore and a forged Transfer Payment Order (TPO) for retirement of import bill of Rs. 9.70 crore was presented at Overseas branch of OBC at Chennai. The fraudster managed to get the inward calls of the Bangalore branch diverted to this residential telephone and purportedly arranged telephonic confirmation of the TPO to Chennai branch.

(c) OBC has filed a case with Central Bureau of Investigation. The bank has placed under suspension two managers of Overseas branch Chennai and one manager of Yelahanka branch, Bangalore for their lapses/negligence.

Use of rain water

†509. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH :

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme for the use of rain water by collecting the same;

(b) if so, the outline of the scheme;

(c) whether Government have also identified the regions of the country having maximum, average and minimum rainfall;

(d) if so, the name of those regions; and

(e) the percentage of land of the country covered by them from the geographical point of view?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) to (e) India receives a rainfall of about 4000 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) every year. Out of this about 1869 BCM appears as runoff in the various rivers of the country.

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.